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ECONOMICS OF NON-VIOLENCE

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"What is wanted in order to keep men full of vitality is opportunity, not only security. Security is merely a refuge from fear; opportunity is the source of hope. The chief test of an economic system is not whether it makes men prosperous or whether it secures distributive justice (though these are both very desirable), but whether it leaves men's instinctive growth unimpeded. To achieve this purpose, there are two main conditions which it should fulfil. It should not cramp men's private affections, and it should give the greatest possible outlet to the impulse of creation. There is in most men, until it becomes atrophied by disuse, an instinct of constructiveness, a wish to make something. The men who achieve most are as a rule, those in whom this instinct is strongest; such men become artists, men of science, statesmen, empire builders, or captains of industry, according to the accidents of temperament and opportunity."

— **BERTRAND RUSSELL.**

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Preface to the Second Edition.

The fact that the first edition of this book is well received both by the public and the press and was soon sold out shows that the publication was well wanted and that the author has done his task well indeed.

In this edition we add Syt. Kumarappa's article which appeared in the *India Speaks* number of *Annals* which treats the same theme. Neither the writer nor the article needs any comment.

We are thankful to Sir Manilal B. Nanavati and Prof. C. N. Vakil, editors of the said special number, for allowing us to reprint Syt. Kumarappa's article.

Translations of this book in Gujarati, Marathi and Hindustani are in preparation. We wish constructive minded publishers of other vernaculars publish this book in the vernaculars of their part of the country.

Preface to the First Edition.

To live in an atmosphere of brotherliness and peace is the eternal longing of mankind; but till now such a social structure as would beget and maintain it has evaded us. After the ravaging experiences of a diabolical war, such a quest is bound to become more pressing. Why have we not yet obtained our most cherished goal and in the light of the answer we get, to think of improving our ways or devising new ones of reaching it is the paramount necessity of our times.

It is the systematic practice of non-violence in all human relationships, above all things, that makes for

peace. Economic relationship is one of the basic human relationships of life. As such it needs to be thoroughly studied from the non-violent angle.

Non-violence, absolute and uncontingent, is the highest ideal that man's mind on its onward march has visualized so far. It is so comprehensive, subtle and intricate that it exacts more of our efforts and demands better of our abilities to realise it. The more composite the end, the harder becomes the understanding of the means. So, we want a literature that is at once contributory to the understanding of the end and elucidation of the means.

"Production or accumulation of marketable wealth still remains the back-bone of 'economics'. This statement will probably be disputed and reference made to the formal emphasis laid upon and the space assigned to distribution in the current text-books. But this is quite illusory. No consistent, no intelligible organic theory of distribution of wealth is to be found in the modern English text-books". Such is the considered opinion of a student of economics and sociology, Mr. J. A. Hobson. Things are no better here.

We have no doubt experiments made in this country for the introduction of non-violent relationships in our affairs. That has contributed to a certain extent to our understanding of the ways and means of non-violent economics. Economic equality is the basic key to the new social structure that we want to build.

So every attempt to put in black and white thoughts on or arising out of the practical efforts to create a non-violent social order which are all the more scanty in the all important aspect of life is more than welcome. Here is a one such of a person who has practical experience of the working up of a non-violent economics as well as deep study and grasp of the subject. We feel sure it will prove useful to those who are interested in the new way of life and working for economic equality.

We are thankful to Dr. J. M. Kumarappa of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences for kindly giving us permission to reprint in a book form Syt. V. L. Mehta's article which appeared in the September issue of their journal *The Indian Journal of Social Work*.

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Economics of Non-Violence

I

While planned economy is an innovation to the Occident brought to the fore largely by Soviet Russia, the dust of ages has settled on the planned orders of the Orient. The whole of the Indian social order is a planned economy that has been functioning for thousands of years. That it should have served us so well all these many centuries is a monument to the farsightedness of the conceivers and to the soundness of the eternal principles upon which it was based. The Hindu order covers all phases of life—political, social, religious, and economic—while the Russian experiment is confined mainly to the economic sphere. The inauguration of the Russian plan is child's play when compared with the stupendous difficulties of communications in the days of yore when the many-sided Hindu plan was launched over a vast country like India.

A close study of this ancient structure will reveal the bedrock of the philosophy and principles of the

economics of permanence which cemented the various constituent parts of this edifice, in striking contrast to the clayey nature of the economics of transience and opportunism which is so characteristic of all Western organizations today.

The Hindus placed man in the perspective of eternity and infinity which makes the seer exclaim: "What is man that Thou art mindful of him!" and to him a thousand ages are but as an evening gone; while the West has made man the lord of creation, and his life of threescore years and ten as a period for self-aggrandizement and indulgence in this universe which has existed for untold millions of years. This fundamental difference in outlook runs through the minutest detail of everyday life, and however fascinating such a study may be, we have not the space to undertake it here. We can only glance at a few of the main features which affect the approach of the Hindu to his economic life.

The Ancient Economic Order

Hindu society is divided into four main groups: (1) the idealistic, which emphasizes the purity of the means; (2) the altruistic, which emphasizes the nobility of the end; (3) the materialistic; and (4) the routine-worker group.

The Hindu plan attempts to avoid exploitation, and aims at distributing justice by maintaining these groups in watertight compartments. In the first group

falls the Brahman, who is allotted respect but no property. He gets his food by begging for it. This must be the lot of all brain workers. They are sterilized economically from misappropriating the fruits of their natural endowments for their selfish ends. Their purpose in life is the service of the community through pure means.

The Kshatriya of the second group loses himself in seeking the welfare of society. His glory is the service of his fellowmen, and his reward, social honor and status.

To the third in order belongs the Vaisya, the materialistic merchant and entrepreneur, who amasses wealth but gets no social honor or position other than what he may secure by dedicating his possessions for the use of the community.

The last in this order is the Sudra, who is happy with his salary, pension and provident fund and has no courage to take the risks that the third group ventures out in and delights in.

Pruned of all extraneous growth, this is the core of the caste system. It curbs devastating cut-throat competition as a factor in social alignment and emphasizes co-operation and obedience as the basis of all law and order. It is graded on a cultural standard of values almost unknown to money economy. Material considerations sink into insignificance when human needs claim our attention. Duty, and not our

rights, determines our position in society. Once these conditions are firmly established, we shall have prepared the way of peace when war shall be no more.

The India of pre-British days had attained a measure of success in achieving a great many of the objects set forth above. Its trade, though encompassing every corner of the then known world, had no need to be backed by the force of arms. People were not rich as riches are counted in America today; neither does a society organized on the above basis aim at such accumulations resulting in a maldistribution of wealth. Naturally, an equitable distribution would entail a higher average, but hardly any spectacular accumulations. There was a widespread contentment which attracted the attention of other nations. Even to this day, the distribution by castes into various occupations shows how well proportioned the different economic channels were. At present, the old-time primary occupations are represented by the following castes:

Caste			Per cent of Population
Brahmans	...	...	5
Kshatriyas	...	...	10
Traders	...	...	1.5
Agriculturists	...	...	50
Shepherds	...	...	3
Carpenters and blacksmiths	...	...	3
Artisans	...	...	15
Oil pressers	...	...	2

Potters	...	...	...	2
Tanners and shoemakers	...	...	...	4
Washermen	...	...	...	1
Barbers	...	...	...	1
Scavengers	...	...	...	1.5
Others	...	...	...	1

Though these castes no longer ply their ancestral trades, yet the figures are indicative of the original proportions planned out. As things are now, over 84 percent of the people live on the land, as the old handicrafts and cottage industries have lost their place, having been ousted by the cheap imports from abroad.

The welfare of a community depends on a well-maintained balance of occupations, as health depends on a well-balanced diet. In every village there should be a small number of artisans who supply the needs of the village. Man needs other things besides bread—the staple food. If all take to agriculture, the community will suffer from a maldistribution of its talents—a social deficiency disease. This is the main trouble in India. For instance, the old goldsmiths have lost their calling and their deft fingers have to break stones for road making. The accumulated skill of centuries of the Hindu artisans is now running to waste, which is a loss to the progress of the human race itself. With the changing requirements of modern life the old-time goldsmiths would have been well utilized in making such article as are in great demand today, say, watches

and other timepieces, and so forth. India imports² these and lets her skilled sons starve for lack of work.

Past Achievements

Before the British smashed this organization, the country was made up of self-governing villages, which employed a common raja to police them and protect them from dacoits and external enemies. They were more or less self-sufficient economically, the export trade being mainly on the surplus production, luxury articles, and curios. The beautiful Dacca muslin that was exported to the London market was the envy of the world. The British manufacturers, who could not compete with these goods on fair terms, soon resorted to protective tariffs against goods from India.

Even as late as 1802, ships and war-ships for England were built by India and England borrowed plans and designs from Indian builders.

The Gram Panchayat, the governing council of the village, was given such functions as required a long-range view to tackle them satisfactorily. The village production was gathered, the village menials were given a certain amount of grains and other things to assure them a subsistence. A certain fraction of the village production was given to the raja for his defense services. The village had its own schools and managed its public utilities like tanks, wells, roads and rest houses. The individual economy was based on the fact of plentiful

availability of labour and scarcity of capital. The beautiful buildings, the canals, the tanks and the trunk roads constructed during that period and existing to this day bear eloquent testimony to the prosperity of the times and to their public spirit.

The decay

The British traders set their minds on destroying their competitors by every means they could use. Military exploits, political intrigues and economic barriers were all pressed into service to gain their ends. The villages were disrupted, their social order was discredited, the people were taxed for the benefit of British trade, railways were built at the cost of India's providing employment for Britishers, and were so organized as to help in the transport of raw materials to England and the import of manufactures into the country by utilizing special and discriminating freight rates. This policy flooded the remotest markets in the interior with foreign goods and drove our skilled artisans to the already overcrowded land as labourers. With the breakup of the economic order the caste system became a grading of the high and the low by the accident of birth, leading to meaningless snobbery. The foreigners took advantage of this disintegration to establish their regime on the principle of "divide and rule." Economically, India ceased to be a manufacturing country and became a raw-material producer for British manufacturers.

The return from raw-material production is always lower than from occupations engaged in processing the goods for consumption. Therefore, if we separate raw-material producers and manufacturers into distinct water-tight compartments beyond political boundaries, the income of the raw-material producers will be definitely lower than the income of the manufacturing group. This has been the effect of British imperialism in India. The raw-material producers (the people of India) have been consigned in perpetuity to lower and decreasing income, while the manufacturer (people of Great Britain) have attempted to assure themselves of the higher yielding sources. This is the essence of imperialism. Apart from all other causes, this factor alone could have accounted for the extreme poverty of India at the present day. Where within a political unit both the production of raw-materials and the conversion into finished goods take place, the national income, making a better average, finds its level at a higher stage.

Present Rural Conditions

The per capita annual income of a villager today is equivalent to about four dollars in American money. The poverty is so acute that one meets with old women gathering grass seeds for gruel to keep the sides of their stomach from sticking together. Many have hardly any rags to cover their nakedness. Rickshaws and man-drawn carts are on the increase, reflecting the competition of man with the beasts of burden for

the "husks that the swine did eat." The people are intelligent and industrious, but have nothing they can turn their hands to. Their few needs are supplied by imported goods, leaving them under-employed and unemployed. Money economy has made it possible to tax these wretched people to build viceregal palaces in Delhi.

There is no governmental help in the form of research to increase the output of the villagers. Such work as is done by research institutes caters to the needs of large-scale centralized industries which till the other day were in the hands of the Britishers.

India claims to be the earliest producer of sugar. The research in sugar cane cultivation has been directed to produce canes with a hard rind like the Co 313 variety, which cannot be crushed by bullock-driven presses, but are useful only to power-driven sugar mills. Mills control prices of the canes. If the agriculturist who leads a precarious existence dares to withhold his cane, he cannot as of old, crush this variety of cane himself and make jaggery or sugar, but has to burn it to clear his field. Thus a farmer becomes almost a factory hand, with this difference, that the factory labourer gets his wages, while the farmer bears the risks of cultivation in a land subject to the vagaries of the monsoon. Similarly, the research in cotton cultivation has resulted in producing long-staple cotton, the seeds of which cannot be fed to cattle. The cotton is sold to mills, and the old-time spinners

and weavers are idle; and if they have any financial reserves they use such to buy their clothes from the mills and thus ultimately ruin themselves.

In this way most of the researches undertaken by Government leave the villagers in the cold, and if they do affect them, it is for the worse.

One of the subsidiary sources of income of a villager used to be carting. During the off season when his bullocks are free from farm operations and irrigation, the farmer used to transport goods. With the advent of the railway and the motor lorry, this source has been cut off. One can understand transportation of fish and fruits by the faster vehicles, where time is of the essence of transport, but why the lorry for transporting from forests timber, which needs time to season? The petrol and automobile interests are too strong to be ignored. Thus every possible channel of earning on income is closing on the villagers, leaving them to poverty, misery and desperation.

A Suitable Economic Order

In laying out blueprints we have to weigh carefully the factors that go to make up the whole. In India, the principal factor is labour, which is running waste. Hence, our plan should be calculated mainly to convert labour into wealth. This situation is the very opposite of what confronted the early settlers in the United States, where with bountiful Nature, labour was scarce, and this led to the development of labour-saving devices. Large scale production and centralized industries were

the outcome, the products of which contain in their constituent costs, little or next to nothing of labour. This factor places such methods out of court in India, where our problem is to convert labour into wealth. We have to find ways and means of organizing industries for the people in such a way that they will call for little capital for producing goods with easily-available raw materials for ready markets at hand.

The famous Kashmir shawls, sold at several hundred dollars each, afford an example of wealth created by labour. The woolen cloth itself costs hardly twenty dollars for the best of them. This is worked upon from three to six months by dexterous embroiderers whose minute and detailed designs no machine on earth has yet been able to copy. Hence, the consumer pays for the labour that has gone into the woolen cloth to make it a thing of beauty and a joy forever, rather than for the raw material because of its rarity or cost of obtaining it, as in the case of diamonds, gold or the legendary dish of peacock tongues.

Centralized industries which are indispensable and which require capital will fall to the lot of the state. These will work not for profit but to meet the needs of the people. Public utilities, communications, research production of power, exploitation of mines, quarries and forests will fall under this group. Iron and steel corporations can be worked by the state to supply iron bars, steel sheets and other needs to the blacksmith, for him to convert them into household requisites. But their

foundries will also turn out water mains, steel rails, girders for bridges and such requirements. These state industries will work at cost without any profit motive and supply the raw materials needed by the artisans engaged in handicrafts and cottage industries. They will not be masters and controllers, but mere adjuncts to decentralized industries. Machines have hitherto been used largely as tools of exploitation. We must safeguard against this state of affairs. Where a process in an industry required machinery to make what human hands cannot accomplish, the use of machines is indicated can be availed of with adequate precaution if the profit motive is divorced from such a unit.

Errors at Resuscitation

Several private attempts are being made to organize the people and put them to work gainfully. The All-India Spinners' Association is aiming at making the people produce their own clothing. It is carrying on research on various processes dealing with cotton, wool, silk, and other raw material experiments to improve the tools, such as the spinning wheel and the loom, are being tried out. Artists are engaged in creating new designs. The association has hundreds of centers in villages scattered throughout the country to bring home to the people the results of its studies and carry to them the message of self-sufficiency and self-help in matters of primary needs.

The All-India Village Industries Association is designed to deal similarly with industries other than textiles, such as food processing, oil pressing, jaggery and sugar making, tanning and leather work, paper making by hand, soap preparation and others.

One or two examples of how we are attempting to help the people economically will be useful to a clear understanding of the method employed.

Until a few years ago, the villagers illumined their huts by burning vegetable oils in crude open containers. Now this has yielded place, even in the remotest of hamlets, to kerosene oil lanterns. Annually India imports about 50 million dollars' worth of oil, and practically all the lamps, costing about an equal amount, for burning this oil also come from abroad. Hence the people of the land derive no employment in supplying this demand. We have been working on this problem for some months. Kerosene oil, being a thin oil, rises from the container to the burner by capillary action through the wick and burns without using up the wick; while vegetable oils, being thicker, will not rise above their level in the container fast enough to feed the flame. Hence the need for designing a lamp with a gravity-fed burner on the Hero's fountain principle. We are placing these designs on the market. When these lanterns are taken up, the farmer will be employed in supplying the oilseed, the oil presser in pressing the oil, the tinker in making the lanterns and the glass blower in manufacturing the

chimneys. Thus all that employments aggregating over 100 million dollars in supplying that one requirement alone, which went abroad and starved the masses, will now be retained in the country.

In times gone by, washermen were in the habit of using reh earth (which appears on the fields as a white deposit after the monsoon season and which is rich in soda carbonate) with lime for washing clothes. Villagers made balls of crude soap for their use from these materials. Now, foreign imported soap has invaded the countryside, and the few soap factories in the country use foreign imported caustic soda. We have turned our attention to this proposition. The reh earth is dissolved in water, and the water, when decanted to get the alkaline matter, is mixed with a proportionate amount of lime to produce caustic lye. From this good soap is being manufactured.

In such simple ways attempts are being made to harness the results of scientific knowledge and research for the benefit of cottage industries.

When villagers are working on a self sufficiency basis, money economy introduces an element of danger, as it tempts people to buy foreign articles. Where markets are at a distance, money becomes the indispensable medium of exchange. Where the need is to convert labour into wealth, barter is a more satisfactory medium. To help poor people to get what they want a yarn exchange has been introduced in one or two places on an experimental basis. A villager

who needs any goods brings to the store a quantity of cotton yarn spun at his home. This is tested as to length and quality, and according to its scheduled standard value he gets a coupon which he can exchange for goods. This immediately affords a ready means of converting labour into consumable goods without resorting to machinery and capital.

Conclusion

No elaborate reasoning is called for today to prove that seeking for raw materials from distant places, transporting them to selected manufacturing countries, converting them into consumable goods without reference to demand, by centralized large-scale production, attempting to create a demand by high-pressure salesmanship or by political control of markets—all these lead to modern wars. If we wish to abandon war, we must arrange our economic order in such a way that it does not require periodical upheavals to put right its working. Man is higher than the beast only in the measure in which he has abandoned violence in his life. People are civilized in inverse ratio to the extent to which they utilize violence. Since the days of Buddha, India has held up non-violence as an ideal. The Hindus have attained a mellowness of maturity in their culture which will eschew with disdain all use of violence in human relations. Might is not going to rule the world notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary. Mammoths and dinosaurs, with all their gigantic muscles, have had to yield place

to the feeble but intellectual man. So also the cultural and spiritual forces will dispel the powers of evil which seem to hold sway today.

If we desire to usher in a world set and organized for peace and good will, there is no other way than to control our greed and curb our avarice. To achieve this on a nation-wide scale, it is imperative that the profit motive be sterilized from large-scale production by reserving all centralized industries to the ownership and control of the state. Handicrafts and cottage industries are nonviolent in a large measure and can be left with impunity in the hands of private individuals even with the incentive to profit, as such an economy has its own limitations and does not lend itself to exploitation generally. May be life in such a society cannot be based on a multiplicity of wants, but there are other considerations much more vital than material possessions.

Thus we see that the old socio-economic-religious order, which was functioning to bring the handicrafts and cottage industries of India to the notice and envy of the world, has been crushed and changed out of recognition. The equilibrium of occupations has been upset, and as a consequence, poverty and ignorance have gripped the people. Nations are warring against nations, hold such people in eternal subjection so as to build empires on their bones. The only way to remedy this is to make exploitation impossible by reserving centralized industries to the state, to supply the

artisans with raw material to arrange to finance and market the goods and to introduce a certain element of barter, the governmental functions being an auxiliary to the requirements of the artisans.

The organization envisaged above will develop the individual's personality, make for equality of distribution and lead to real democracy politically; while centralization in economic activity leads to dictatorship and tyranny in politics. India is striving for true freedom for the individual and if she succeeds in attaining it through the organization set forth above, she will have given the human race a lever to progress towards plenty, prosperity and peace.

J. C. Kumarappa

II

At a time when Asia and Europe are ravaged by the most diabolical war that humanity has witnessed so far, it is but natural that the thoughts of mankind should turn to peace. "The thing that makes for peace above all others," as Aldous Huxley observes, * "is the systematic practice in all human relationships of non-violence." The outstanding contribution of Mahatma Gandhi to the achievement of this aim for which every human being craves is that he, more than any other world teacher, living or dead, has not only conceived a social philosophy based on non-violence, but has also practised what he preaches, and has inspired thousands

* Ends and Means.

of his countrymen and women to accept the creed in their daily life. In a sense, Gandhiji is a prophet, because he foresaw, long before most others did, the chasm into which the civilization that had enthralled us was drawing us. He had begun to think of a new way of life based on non-violence long before the conflicts that now threaten to engulf us had manifested themselves.

Explaining the significance of the Charkha as the symbol of non-violence, Gandhiji says: "The Charkha had become part of the programme of love. As I was picturing life based on non-violence, I saw that it must be reduced to the simplest terms consistent with high thinking. Food and raiment will always remain the prime necessities of life. Life itself becomes impossible if these two are not assured. For non-violent defence, therefore, society has to be so constructed that its members may be able, as far as possible to look after themselves in the face of an invasion from without or disturbances from within. Just as a domestic kitchen is the easiest thing in such circumstances, the *takli* or at the most the spinning wheel and the loom are the simplest possessions for the manufacture of cloth. Society based on non-violence can only consist of groups settled in villages in which voluntary co-operation is the condition of dignified and peaceful existence. A society which anticipates and provides for meeting violence with violence will either lead a precarious life or create big cities and magazines for defence purposes. It is not unreasonable to presume

from the state of Europe that its cities, its monster factories and huge armaments are so intimately interrelated that the one cannot exist without the other. The nearest approach to civilization based upon non-violence is the erstwhile village republic."

In an age when democracy is recognized as the basis of society, it is pertinent to point out that a society of the type that Gandhiji contemplates, has inherent in it the elements of a democratic constitution such as the industrial civilization that the modern world knows to-day has not been able to build up so far. Thinking minds in the West agree with Gandhiji in this respect. "A community which is still predominantly agricultural," asserts Dr. A. D. Lindsay,* "has the social basis of democracy secure." "Consider," he proceeds to remark, "the nature of large scale mechanical production. Its economic efficiency has been increasingly based on a concentration of planning and initiative in a few hands. In modern industry, the organization and discipline of men has become in itself an instrument of production—a few have governed, and the great mass of workers have been organized and disciplined. Thus, the structure of modern production itself is essentially undemocratic." "If the responsibility and individuality produced in a country by agricultural life are a good seedground of democracy," he concludes, "the denial of responsibility and individuality incident to mass production is a very bad

* I Believe in Democracy.

one..... In an industrial society, most men depend for their livelihood on finding a place in the system.... They have none of the natural economic independence and security which largely prevail in a democratic agricultural society."

It is through the constructive programme that Gandhiji seeks to take the nation along the path of non-violence and democracy in action in matters that affect its daily life. That programme represents the achievement of *Poorna Swaraj* by truthful and non-violent means. The pursuit of the desired goal through violent and, therefore, untruthful means is unacceptable to him because of its inevitable concomitant—the destruction of property, life and truth.

A civilization based on violence breeds the passion for power and where power politics holds sway, perfect equality—economic or otherwise—such as is connoted by his definition of complete independence, is inconceivable. To him, independence is a structure built on sand if it is not built upon the solid foundation of economic equality. Economic equality, however, he holds, is possible only in a state of society based on non-violence. On the economic plane, non-violence means the pursuit of *Swadeshi*, the elimination of the profit-motive and the competitive spirit, the assurance of a minimum subsistence to every member of society, the promotion of village self-sufficiency and, lastly, the according of the supreme place even in mundane matters to the things of the spirit.

What exactly is connoted by the term *Swadeshi*? Gandhiji's broad definition is that any article is *Swadeshi* if it subserves the interest of the millions. Amplifying his view, Gandhiji explains that an industry to be Indian must be manned by Indians, both skilled and unskilled. Its capital and machinery should be Indian. The labour employed should have a living wage and be comfortably housed, while the welfare of the children of the labourers should be guaranteed by the employers. This definition, however, does not fully bring out Gandhiji's conception. *Swadeshi*, according to him, is the sentiment in us which prompts us in our daily-dealings to patronize the goods of our immediate neighbours rather than the goods brought from distant places, which calls upon each individual or group to depend for his or its sustenance mainly upon the immediate environment. This postulates the education of the consumer and the acceptance by him of sacrifice for the furtherance of the cause that he seeks in the interest of society. In communities organized on the modern Western pattern, sections of society are called upon by the State to undergo sacrifices in various forms. What Gandhiji wants is not obedience secured by the coercion of the State but the willing co-operation of the growing section of the community, as they come to recognize the implications of the spirit of *Swadeshi*, voluntarily to subject themselves to a sacrifice for the cause. Apart from the effect on the purses of the people, this calls for a change in their tastes and their outlook

which may take some time to be brought about. If, however, the education of the public proceeds as Gandhiji would have it, and touches sooner or later the life of every single individual in India, the result, in his words, will be to make everyone feel aglow with the possession of a power that is hidden within himself and make him proud of his identity with every drop of the ocean of Indian humanity. The non-violence of this spirit of *Swadeshi* will thus make it a potent force in revolutionizing economic life.

As Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has often pointed out, Mahatma Gandhi's outlook on life being essentially that of a great humanitarian, he is naturally not interested in economic theories and doctrines. Nevertheless, there are aspects of his philosophy which distinguish his way of thinking and of action from those of the capitalist school of thought which has dominated economic life almost all over the world for well-nigh over a century. If the profit-motive is not anathema to Gandhiji and if he does not seek its absolute elimination, it is because he contemplates production being carried on by individuals, on a restricted scale according to their capacity, on a basis of self-sufficiency and for the services of their neighbours. Where production is largely decentralized, the profit-motive has not much scope for play. But that production should be for use and not for profit is common ground between his creed and that of socialism. Production being for the service of the community and

not for the enrichment of individuals or groups, the competitive spirit, such as has full play under *laissez faire*, is at a discount and yields place to co-operation in the service of the community. Even if Gandhiji may not claim that the instruments of production should be socialized, he insists that their control should not be at the disposal of the community in the sense of subserving its purposes and its interests. It is for this reason that he demands the nationalization of all large scale centralized industries such as are essential for the needs of the community; though, according to him, these should be much less important in the life of the nation than the decentralized industries through which the bulk of the country's production should be organized.

It is through the dispersal of production and the enforcement of the doctrine of trusteeship that he seeks to establish economic equality in India as a pattern for humanity to follow elsewhere. This brings into play the creed of non-violence which, while ensuring subsistence to every one who works, prevents exploitation of the weak by the strong, of the unorganized by the organized, of the poor by the rich, of the employee by the employer. A non-violent system of government, Gandhiji avers, is an impossibility, so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists. There has to be, on the one hand, a levelling down of the few rich in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of the nation's wealth and, on the other, a levelling up of

the naked millions. Gandhiji hopes for a voluntary abdication on the part of the capitalists of wealth and the power it confers, failing which there is bound to be, he fears, a violent revolution. The non-violent way, therefore, is the acceptance of his doctrine of trusteeship.

What are the main features of this doctrine, apart from the underlying assumption of economic equality? The first is that the use of any property that is possessed by the capitalist owner is determined by social necessity, and, secondly, that its management should be in keeping with equalitarian ideas of social justice. The trustee is, albeit, a self-appointed manager, but his administration has to be subject to social controls. Lastly, he should recognize that he is a trustee for all the wealth which he collects. What he retains for his own use may depend not upon his discretion but upon the direction of the community, the maximum he is permitted to retain being not more than a multiple of the average earnings of those engaged in the enterprise from which the gains are obtained. Gandhiji does not claim that the doctrine of trusteeship has been examined in all its bearings, much less worked out by him in all its manifold aspects. It provides, however, for a non-violent transition from the present stage of capitalist domination to that of a defunctionalized capitalism. Instead of destroying or liquidating the wrong-doer as has been done in Russia, an attempt is made, as Mr. M. R. Masani puts

it, * to undo the wrong of the anti-social use of property without resort to the authority of the State.

The transition is best secured by introducing the principle of decentralization of production. "Its supreme merit," it has been observed, "lies in the fact that it prevents the emergence of wide disparities in income and style of living." The average individual producer is so concerned about earning a competence and laying by, if possible, a small surplus for emergencies that he cannot think in terms of increasing his margin of profit. Production carried on by such individuals can scarcely be said to be based on the profit-motive, so that the encouragement of production by these individuals or their guilds or co-operatives working on a small scale leads, necessarily, to the elimination of the profit motive in production.

It tends also to eliminate another factor which has spelt ruin for our economy, namely competition. With the emphasis removed from personal gain the competitive spirit has little scope for play. With its disappearance one may hope to see the avoidance of the economic waste that competition involves, apart from the social evils such as ill-will and bitterness that it breeds, and the conflicts to which it gives rise. The incentives for labour will be the service of the community, production for use, and the enrichment of all rather than the aggrandisement of the few. The road of decentralization is also the road to

responsible self-government. To quote Mr. Aldous Huxley, again, *. "At present the management of large scale production is in the hands of irresponsible individuals seeking profit.....It is the unco-ordinated activity of large scale production that leads to these periodical crises and depressions which inflict such untold hardship upon the working masses of the people in industrialized countries. Small scale production carried on by individuals who run the instruments with which they personally work is not subject to periodical slumps. Further more, the ownership of the means of small scale personal production has none of the disastrous political, economic and psychological consequences of large scale production-loss of independence, enslavement to an employer, insecurity of the tenure of employment.....In this way many of the advantages of individualism can be preserved and, at the same time, opposition to indispensable reforms will be minimized."

The contribution that Gandhiji has made to the co-relating of the means of production to its ends is well brought out by Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao in an address delivered at the University of Delhi† where he examines the different constituents of work on which depends all economic activity. These are: the art element in work; the dignity and pride element in work; the personality killing element in work; the

* Ends and Means.

† An Essay on the Nature and Purpose of Economic Activity.

character forming element in work. All these are elements in economic activity which have a bearing on the development of human personality and, therefore, in the ultimate end of human activity. In economic activity as it is ordered to-day, it is doubtful if there is scope for the free play of these factors. Economic life should be so organized as not to hamper but to foster and promote the end of all human activity, namely, the development of human personality. It may be claimed for the policy of decentralized production, which Gandhiji seeks to promote, that it offers full scope for the play of the creative instinct, provides an atmosphere which safeguards the self-respect and dignity of the individual, avoids the ignoring and suppressing of the personality of the worker and helps in the building up of the character of individual, as an entity and as a unit in the social organism.

To Gandhiji, decentralized production is synonymous with the reduction of the use of machinery. His condemnation of the machine is based on two grounds, economic and sociological, but both arise out of the doctrine of non-violence which colours his entire outlook on life. The sociological approach is the same as that which inspires humanitarians of his way of thought in various countries. For instance, Mr. L. P. Jacks * traces the emergence of the machine from its proper place as a servant of mankind into a state where there has been a "Surrender in our social life of the

* Revolt Against Mechanism.

creative principle to the mechanical." The dominating position which the machine has come to occupy in life has bred a passion for control; hence, planning for the future has to be on mechanistic lines. The machine should be subordinate to the creative purpose of life. Believing in the possibility of re-educating men in the right use of machinery, Mr. Jacks hopes for a time when machines need not be destroyed, but will be mastered "when creativeness will have got the upper hand of them, using them for its own ends and inventing new ones for the same purpose—the most splendid creative age the world has ever seen, our present mechanical age being the road to it. That day if it ever dawns will be a good day for religion and for other things as well, for joy, for peace and for good-will among men. That day, competition will turn no more on who can get the most of this world's goods, but on who can make the finest use of them, the new competition, creative competition, which enables all who take part in it, spurring them to surpass themselves and binding them together in the pursuit of excellence—the dynamic bond of the universe."

Gandhiji's attitude is similar, but more emphatic, and yet less visionary. Writing nearly twenty years ago, he observed: "Machinery has its place; it has come to stay. But it should not be allowed to displace human labour. An improved plough is a good thing. But if by some change one man could plough up the whole of the land of India and control all the agricul-

tural produce, and if the millions had no other occupation, they would starve, and being idle, they would become dunces, as many have already become. There is hourly danger of many more being reduced to that unenviable state. I would welcome every improvement in the cottage machine, but I know that it is criminal to displace hand labour by the introduction of power-driven spindles, unless one is at the same time ready to give millions of farmers some other occupations in their homes." This is the sociological and economic argument all rolled into one.

Machinery, therefore, must be dethroned from the place of exclusiveness and exploitation enjoyed by it, and its indiscriminate use should be prevented in view of its potentiality for economic waste and destruction. Simple tools and instruments, as well as such machinery as saves individual labour and lightens the burden of the millions of cottages, aids mass labour and simplifies it or adds to the volume of employment, are all welcome. The movement for the revival of village industries, Gandhiji explains, will protect any machinery which, without depriving masses of men of the opportunity to work, helps the individual and increases his efficiency, and which he can handle at will without being its slave. When Gandhiji observes that he considers it a sin and an injustice to use machinery for the purpose of concentrating power and riches in the hands of the few, he bases his opposition, primarily, on the evils arising out of the capitalist exploitation of the

machine. But he goes further and holds that the evils that the machine brings in its train are inherent in the industrial civilization it promotes. Hence, he believes that the extended use of the machine may not be compatible with his concept of a free and just society.

This position calls for some examination. The machine method may be easy but it is not necessarily a blessing on that account. If the craze for it continues, Gandhiji fears, a time will come when we shall be so incapacitated and weak that we shall begin to curse ourselves for having forgotten the use of our hands and other limbs. The elimination of drudgery is all to the good; but if human labour is reduced to a minimum, there will arise the question of how best to employ the leisure that will be at the disposal of men and women, as also to get an opportunity to exercise their limbs so that they may digest the food they eat and thus grow strong and healthy. Are the useless, unproductive, expensive games and exercises which are encouraged today a suitable substitute for the useful, productive, handy occupations that are abandoned? "Leisure is good and necessary upto a point only," remarks Gandhiji; "for God created man to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow." Hence he dreads the prospect of our being able to produce all that we want, including our food-stuffs out of a conjurer's hat, as it were! Moreover, as Prof. J. J. Anjaria has remarked: *

* Gandhian Approach to Indian Economics.

discomodity, a disutility always to be minimised—it is a life-giving force.”

Similarly, the argument that the use of machinery promotes a rise in the standard of life is scarcely tenable in India when it is obvious that the growth of industrialism during the last half a century has not had the desired effect of bringing about any material change in the living conditions of the large masses of our population, neither in the urban nor in rural areas. Besides, there is nothing meritorious, Gandhiji holds, in the mere multiplication of wants, if that is deemed, as is so often done at present, a criterion of a rise in the standard of life.

The argument that clinches the issue lies in the fact of the deteriorating effect the extensive use of machinery has on the problem of unemployment in the country. “In a country where crores are without work”, remarks Gandhiji, “to use any power except that of men is to still further increase the unemployment”. The machine may pour wealth into the pockets of the chosen few: little attention is paid to crores of people from whom the machine snatches away their bread. The process of industrialization, as it had gone on so far, instead of reducing the volume of unemployment, has added to it, it has had the effect of throwing out of employment thousands of workers in cottages in rural areas and compelling them to draw scanty sustenance from the land. What the tragic consequences of such a process are, is evident from the sad calamity

which in 1943 overtook Bengal where the worst sufferers from the famine were landless labourers and artisans and other cottage workers in the rural areas of the Province. In Bombay, where industrialization has made greater headway than in any other Province, in India, the conclusion to which an expert-committee with Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, an eminent industrialist, as Chairman and Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao, a distinguished economist, as Secretary, arrived at, may be summed up in the following words:

“Thus the industrial evolution and modernization of the Province has seen the agricultural community suffering in two ways, namely increasing pressure on land and increase in under-employment due to loss of subsidiary occupations”.

There were according to the census of 1931, at least 2 crores of totally unemployed persons, in India. Adding to these the number of persons who, owing to the seasonal character of the agricultural industry, are chronically under-employed the aggregate number of the unemployed may be put down at 4 crores, as computed by Sir M. Visvesvarayya in his “Economic Planning for India”. The problem of unemployment in India is thus, as Dr. Sudhir Sen points out, not a residual one but a primary one. The number of persons employed in industries using mechanical power was less than 35 lakhs. Even if we include the numbers engaged in railways, shipping and mining and allowing for an increase in employment caused by the War, we

shall get a figure which is about one tenth of the aggregate number of the unemployed. Apart, therefore, from the opposition to machinery which Gandhiji puts forward on idealistic grounds, there is the equally substantial ground for his objection to the so-called technological progress which impoverishes the countryside and as a result degrades and dehumanizes the rural population. "Bread for all before cakes for some" is thus a cry for life-giving work which can be ignored, as Gandhiji has warned us time and again, only at the cost of the suffering and miseries of large sections of our population.

Writing of the conditions in China which owing to the huge size of its population are nearly akin to ours, Prof. R H. Tawney observes, "In view of the long periods of enforced idleness to which the Chinese farmer is exposed—he is said, in parts of China not to be employed in agriculture for more than a hundred days in the year—by employments which supplement his income ought obviously to be encouraged. In the majority of European countries and particularly in those with large peasant population, rural industries carried on in the cottage of the workers still play a more important part than is commonly realized. In China the impression of a superficial observer is that hardly a district is without one or more of them. The dexterity, ingenuity, resourcefulness and above all, sense of beauty of her common people, are a social and economic asset of inestimable value. The course of wisdom, it may be suggested, is to build upon them.

"Unfortunately," he adds, (he wrote before the days of the movement for the reorganization of small scale industries through co-operative societies took shape) there are few signs that clear views have been formed of the part which such crafts are to play in the future economy of China." Will their decline be accepted without demur as in England, or as in Germany, will an attempt be made to preserve them by improving their productive technique and business organization? This means there should be a thorough investigation of our whole economy and examination of the respective spheres of cottage and large scale industry. For himself, Gandhiji has defined the scope, the principal ground for his choice being that he is oppressed by the problem of unemployment. He wishes to plan for full employment because to him unemployment is waste. He wishes to see the entire employable population employed in productive work. Necessarily, therefore, the drive for the encouragement of cottage industries must be intensified till the point of full employment is reached. For these reasons, Gandhiji looks upon the development of Khadi and other village industries as integral feature of the national urge for freedom. They constitute, according to him, India's peculiar contribution to the building up of the new social order in which he hopes pauperism, starvation and idleness will be unknown. They provide scope for earnest national workers to identify themselves with the economic struggle of the millions of the unemployed and underemployed in our villages.

It may be urged, especially at a time like this when there has been devastation on a vast scale, that what the world needs today is the increase of production on a stupendous scale and that to secure this end, the standard of productivity of the individual should be raised. At the same time, it is being increasingly recognized that there should be full employment provided for the whole employable population if social security is to be ensured for every unit in the community. Once, the gaps caused by destruction have been repaired, the provision of full employment will be possible in countries like Great Britain and the United States of America only on the basis of their ability to increase, on an intensive scale, their exports to countries which need those goods or on which the goods can be forced. In as much as every country will seek to develop its economy on the same basis, the free markets in which the industrially advanced countries can operate will be limited. Hence the need for colonies, dependencies, mandated territories, spheres of influence. The world will thus be confronted again with a fight of markets, the exploitation of the markets going hand in hand with the exploitation of labour, agricultural and industrial, of these unfortunate countries. Industrialism based on large scale production through centralized undertakings and Imperialism, open or disguised, must, therefore, march together; the former is crippled without the latter. Imperialism in its turn brings about conflicts by arousing envy and rivalry amongst nations, each anxious, at least to hold on to

what it has, if not greedy for further fields of exploitation. Thus we have an endless succession of wars and interludes which are preparations for wars, presaging a dark future for humanity, unless the world realized where the mechanistic civilization leads it.

Writing nearly twenty years ago, Gandhiji remarked that though he could not claim to know the diagnosis of the European disease, nor the remedy in the same sense in which he claimed to know both of India, he felt that fundamentally, the disease was the same in Europe as in India, despite the fact that the people of Europe enjoyed political power. Asian and African races were exploited for the benefit of the peoples of Europe, but the process of exploitation did not stop there. Shorn of all the camouflage, the exploitation of the masses of Europe was sustained by the same means by which the European races exploited their fellowmen in Asia and Africa. If they wish to free themselves from exploitation and degradation, the people of Europe should, according to Gandhiji, take to the path of non-violence in economic life. Undoubtedly, a juster distribution of the products of labour is necessary, but along with it must come a recognition of the basic fact of economic life that we should all cease to think of getting what we can and decline to receive what all cannot get. This immediately takes us, Gandhiji avers, to contentment and simplicity voluntarily adopted. Under the new outlook, the multiplication of material wants will not be the aim of life; the aim will be rather their restriction consistently with comfort. Only if this ideal makes successful appeal to the people of the war-torn world, can we hope to check exploitation and its consequent degradation of the exploiter and the exploited and to end the struggles for economic supremacy and political domination.

The Constructive Programme

The constructive programme is the construction of Poorna Swaraj by truthful and non-violent means. It is the way of new life. It steps in naturally as destructive forces have had their sway and almost done their task. Its complete fulfilment is the attainment of freedom. It consists of:

1. **COMMUNAL UNITY**—It means an unbreakable heart unity. Every one has to feel his identity with the millions of Hindustanis and cultivate personal friendship with persons representing faiths other than his own.

2. **REMOVAL OF UNTOUCHABILITY**—The problem can be successfully tackled by removal of the sin of untouchability in one's own life, propaganda for its removal among the so-called higher castes and service of the Harijans themselves.

3. **PROHIBITION**—The addicts to the drink not only become physically ruined but also become moral degenerates. Self-purification is the only lasting and healthy deliverance.

4. **KHADI**—It means a wholesale Swadeshi mentality. It is the symbol of unity of Indian humanity and of its economic freedom and equality.

5. **OTHER VILLAGE INDUSTRIES**—They come in as handmaids to Khadi. Village economy cannot be complete without them.

6. **VILLAGE SANITATION**—One of the primary necessities of a village. A sense of national or social sanitation is not a virtue among us.

7. **BASIC EDUCATION**—It aims at utilizing to the best advantage the natural creative instinct of a child and thus to transform him into a model villager.

8. **ADULT EDUCATION**—True political and other useful and essential general education by word of mouth for enlightenment and awakening.

9. **UPLIFT OF WOMEN**—No society can make real progress if one half of its members are suppressed. We must banish the idea of inferiority of women and give them their rightful place of absolute equality.

10. **EDUCATION IN HEALTH AND HYGIENE**—Ignorance of the laws of health are responsible for majority of diseases. Simple food, clean living and regular exercise are morally uplifting as well.

11. **PROPAGANDA OF RASHTRABHASHA**—A vast country like ours needs a common language for interprovincial intercourse. We must be able to read and write in both the Devanagari and Urdu scripts.

12. **CULTIVATION OF LOVE OF ONE'S OWN LANGUAGE**—Every individual has to make his own direct contribution to the Independence movement. This is impossible unless every step is explained in their own languages.

14. **WORK FOR ADIVASIS**—They are the flesh of our flesh deliberately kept separate. They have been neglected by us and work of education and general uplift amongst them is necessary.

15. **WORK AMONG KISANS, LABOUR AND STUDENTS**—All vital elements of society.

What They Say

ABOUT

Hamara Hindostan Publications.

A Few Press Opinions

Youth's Burden

This brochure contains a discourse addressed to India's youth. The caption of the book is suggesting. The onerous task of moulding the future of this sub-continent will not just be something akin to a pleasure cruise when juxtaposed with world-wide upheavals and fluctuations all-round. A must-be-read book.

Bharat Jyoti.

Pandit Nehru is a good guide to those youths marching on the path of national new order and this lecture also exhorts the youth to cultivate a certain type of view point for life instead of parrot-like knowledge of schools and colleges and to shoulder the burden of national and international activities. All the enthusiastic and country-loving youths must read this book.

Prajabandhu.

U N I T Y

This is a very timely publication being a collection on Hindu-Muslim unity and other allied subjects with Gandhiji's interpretation of the Gita and Maulana Azad's interpretation of the Quran in the Appendices.

A book of this nature deserves wide circulation among the politically-minded people of the country.

Modern Review.

Within eighty pages much impressive material has been compressed to stress the fundamental unity of India.

Behar Herald.

To those who are either disturbed or disheartened by it, the booklet should prove specially useful, covering as it does many aspects of the unity of the nation and the obstacles to its strengthening.....

The Social Welfare.

The Voice of the Autumn Leaf

The abstracts are grouped under different headings and will be found interesting even by the grown-ups. The selection is done judiciously and deserves to be read and digested by the younger generation.

The Bombay Chronicle.

No student should fail to read this small book which reveals Mahatmaji's thoughts on 'Students and Politics', 'Students and the Constructive programme and such other subjects.'

Navakal.

He Follows Christ

While of special appeal to a minority community, the book nonetheless possesses an interest for all those who disbelieve in the uselessness of violence and the utility of 'AHIMSA'.

The Calcutta Review.

This booklet attempts to place before Christian Indians what Gandhiji stands for. The booklet is highly instructive and very readable. It presents a phase of Gandhiji's life that has a permanent appeal far beyond that of political vicissitudes.

The Prabuddha Bharat.

AN APPEAL

The task of rebuilding is hard and mighty indeed. All sorts of persons having different capacities and abilities are required to erect the new mansion. So, everyone has to contribute his or her quota.

It is our humble and constant endeavour to bear in mind how we as publishers can be useful to the country. In that light, we carry on our activities, according to our own lights. But for the better working of any such efforts, it is desirable that all such efforts are co-operative and co-ordinated. A little co-operation from the public can immensely help our work. So, we appeal to them to co-operate with us in any way that is suitable to them.

As India is essentially the India of villages, any national work, worth its name, must of necessity be beneficial to the villagers. There is a great cultural gulf between those who live in the villages and those who live in the cities. The facilities that citizens get for their cultural and intellectual advancement is not easy to hand to villagers. There is no organisation which can provide them. Moreover to incur expenses, for these when they are hard pressed even for the primary necessities of life is an extra burden which they cannot afford. So, in order to meet these national need we have drawn up the following Village Service Scheme. Our publications will reach them immediately they are published without their spending anything for the same.

Henceforth our publications will also be in Gujarati. People living in the cities are in duty bound

~~to repay~~ their enormous debt to the villages. So, we feel they must send these vernacular versions to the villages, preferably, if they so like to the village from which they hail, at their own expense. In order that this can be done systematically and no overlapping occurs and the distribution is representative, it would be desirable that all such villages where these books may be sent, should be within our knowledge.

So, those who are desirous of helping us in this scheme should send their names and addresses, names of persons or institutions in the village, where they desire to send the literature and names of villages and talukas. To save a repetition of charges every time a new book is published we suggest that they should register their names by sending us Rs. 5/-, so that the respective villages will be placed on our mailing list. One person may send these books to more than one village. They will be duly furnished with the detailed account of the amount on its exhaustion.

This is one of the ways by which persons living in the cities can help their brethren in the villages. It is everybody's job, to be done immediately. We are sure all will help us in this national venture of ours to serve village India. We particularly appeal to the students to give their due share in this piece of constructive work. Here is an opportunity of national service which is within everyone's means as regards time, energy and money.

As we are at present able to bring the scheme in operation in Gujarat only we wish and pray that others interested in such a work will do the same in their part of the country.